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ABSTRACT

This monograph considers 12 questions which could provide guidelines for local administrators and school boards to follow in considering the concept of differentiated staffing: 1) What are your instructional objectives and is the proposed staffing pattern related to these objectives? 2) Will the proposed new patterns provide for continued flexibility so that the school system can adapt to future needs? 3) Will the new patterns be developed so that they will be able to individualize the teaching-learning process? 4) Do your plans for the training of educational personnel incorporate the same principles inherent in your instructional plans for children? 5) If more efficient time utilization is one of your primary concerns, will your school provide the necessary training for educational personnel? 6) Have you prepared for the training of personnel so that the school can make optimum use of the skills of administrative staff? 7) Will the proposed pattern contribute to the enhancement of teacher professionalism? 8) Will instructional personnel be involved in the decision-making process when relevant to their responsibilities? 9) Has the community been involved in planning the new patterns? 10) Have other agencies and institutions participated in the planning? 11) To what extent will the re-examination of your school organization be coordinated with other local, state, and federal programs? 12) Have you considered a design for evaluating the patterns? (MBM)

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INFORMATION REPORT #2

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A READINESS FOR DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING:

Questions Relevant To Development And Training Activities

BUREAU OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

SP005001

OCTOBER, 1969

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TALLAHASSEE • FLORIDA
FLOYD T. CHRISTIAN, COMMISSIONER

QUESTIONS RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF FLEXIBLE STAFFING PATTERNS AND RELATED TRAINING ACTIVITIES*

More efficient utilization of the time and talents of educational personnel is a growing concern not only at the local and state levels but one of national concern as well. Coupled with this concern are the crying need for individualization of learning experiences with students in our schools, the need for changing the role of instructional personnel, and the need for restating educational ob jectives in performance terms.

To facilitate these needs the Florida Department of Education is actively promoting the development of flexible staffing patterns and related training activities. In seeking ways to proceed with the developmental activities the Department is encouraging the exploration of the staff differentiation process. Those educators who purport the many advantages of the concept of differentiated staffing as applied to flexible staff utilization indicate that differentiated staffing must be viewed as a process for accomplishing our educational objectives. A key element to consider in this process would be the delineation of instructional responsibility which would provide specific performance based criteria for instructional personnel.

Staffing patterns indeed do have a significant relationship to the degree in which we as educators are able to accomplish the performance objectives established for the school systems. In achieving these objectives it is important to recognize that school personnel are individuals, that individuals are different, and that each individual has personal initiative in setting his own goals as well as a sense of achievement for these goals. However, it is unlikely that we can successfully attain these established goals without the individualization of teaching. It is also unlikely that sufficient individualization can take place within the teaching organization currently employed by a majority of our school systems. An ideal individualization program, allowing for planning, developmental and transitional phases that

may take several years would be a total school system differentiated, from paraprofessionals through district administrators, with performance goals set for each.

Any discussion by educators or interested lay people concerning the process of developing and implementing a more flexible staffing pattern and related training activities must of necessity confront many basic educational questions. A differentiated staff can in fact become a vehicle for a thorough re-examination of the entire instructional program. Areas such as curriculum, facilities, in-service education, better utilization of time (scheduling) and methods of instruction all require investigation as a school or school system moves toward reorganization of its staffing patterns. Careful planning is essential. Too many attempts to embark on flexible school organization have floundered because those involved do not recognize how fundamental such changes can be.

The questions listed below are not inclusive; each school or school system will undoubtedly have its own sense of educational rigidities that it wishes to modify. For continuity, the questions have been placed in sequence and grouped to cover the following general areas:

program relevancy to assure a degree of continuous adaptability in fulfillment of stated objectives;

the individualization process in both learning and teaching;

efficient utilization of time and talent;

individual growth as it relates to improved professionalism;

related involvement of other programs, agencies, and community;

and validation of the evaluation process to assure continuous growth and development.

The questions are to be taken as lead questions for faculty discussion groups or possible guidelines for local administrators and school boards to follow in considering the concept of differentiated staffing as a viable alternative.

1. What are your instructional objectives, and is the proposed staffing pattern related to those objectives? Some school systems may wish only to differentiate the staff of a single school and may wish to plan a series of training activities related to the achievement of that goal. Other school systems may wish to look forward to a flexible school organization for the entire school district and may wish to move toward such a goal through a systematic, orderly process which should be carefully defined by phases. Whatever the instructional objectives may be, the local leadership must state them specifically and relate the proposed staffing activities to a step-by-step achievement of those objectives. The evaluation of the proposed staffing changes should be based heavily on the extent to which the proposed changes make clear the relationship between the instructional objectives and the identified needs of the local school district.

2. Will the proposed new flexible staffing patterns provide for continued flexibility so that the school system can adapt to future needs? By definition, a flexible school organization should remain so. The new organization should not become another orthodoxy that is rigid and unresponsive to emerging needs and new knowledge. School districts or school systems should consider how the new organization can be continuously adaptable. The new organization should be able, at any given time, to revise the staffing patterns, its schedule, its curriculum, its facilities, and its in-service training programs to fit the reassessed needs not only of the students but the faculty and the community as well. A question that might be asked in considering provisions for "continued flexibility" might be, "Do you currently have the organizational ability to reassess your needs as you work for a relevant educational program?"

3. Will newly proposed flexible staffing patterns be developed so that they will be able to individualize the teaching-learning process? The ultimate aim of reorganizing staffing patterns is to enhance the educational learning experience of all students. Improved instructional programs should not overlook the potential in performance criteria as the proper basis for student progress through the educational process. Therefore, school systems should consider specifically how differentiated staffing patterns will improve the learning environment in their schools.

4. Do your plans for the training of educational personnel incorporate the same principles inherent in your instructional plans for children? That is, does your teacher training plan incorporate performance criteria and individualized instruction for teachers? Individual teacher differ just as individual pupils differ. Flexible staffing patterns can capitalize on these differences. The place to start capitalizing is in the pre- and in-service training of teachers. Individualizing teacher training programs could possibly be a potential strategy for individualizing instruction in elementary and secondary schools.

5. If more efficient time utilization is one of your primary concerns, will your school district provide the necessary training for educational personnel so that they will be able to understand and apply a more flexible time schedule in the schools? Modifications in the time schedule are essential to a program aimed at flexibility. Adoption of an open schedule will expose other limitations and deficiencies in the instructional program. The ramification of adopting a variable time schedule must be considered early in the planning process if a staff training program designed for implementation is to be effective.

6. Have you identified and prepared for the training of educational personnel so that the school or school district can make optimum use of the skills and talents of current administrative as well as instructional staff? In order to become effective, a differentiated staffing pattern must include significant administrative changes in the organizational structure of the educational system. Responsible educators should consider, therefore, the means whereby traditional modes of organization can be changed to permit staffing patterns to emerge and to operate. Administrative differentiation is a necessary concomitant of instructional differentiation.

7. Will the proposed flexible staffing pattern contribute to the enhancement of teacher professionalism? School systems should recognize that differentiated staffing patterns should contribute to attracting and retraining talented people in the education profession. Local in-service training projects related to the establishment of flexible staffing patterns should influence teaching behavior, have a relation to the responsibilities of educational personnel, and provide opportunities for upward mobility within the teaching profession. Performance should become the main criteria for staff as well as students. In-service training projects should take into account a plan for more rational advancement and promotion criteria for educational personnel. Levels of responsibility to which educational personnel are to be trained should be specified in detail. Salary schedules should be re-examined to determine if they provide salaries commensurate with the newly-differentiated responsibilities.

8. Will instructional personnel be involved in the decision-making process when relevant to their instructional responsibilities? Every effort should be made by those in legal positions of authority to recognize the individual skills and dignity of instructional personnel. It may be advisable to consider the merits of moving from a "work-for" situation to a "work-with" relationship between administrators and other school personnel.

9. Has the community been involved in the planning for the new patterns of school organization? Has community participation been taken into account in shaping the newly proposed staffing patterns? Any significant change or improvement of education is more likely to succeed if the community is effectively involved. School systems should not attempt to plan a new pattern of school organization without careful consultation with community representatives. Every effort should be made to identify and utilize the community resources in redefining and implementing the new staffing organization. The educational community must also be involved as directly as possible --- teaching staff and students. It is crucial to establish the administrative machinery by which teachers and students can effectively participate and plan a program of action.

10. Have other agencies and institutions made commitments to or participated in planning for a more flexible school organization and subsequent in-service training activities to follow? Comprehensive new approaches to staff utilization cannot and should not be planned and implemented by any single institution in isolation. New staffing patterns should involve new ways of preparing teachers and revising certification procedures, involving not only community but business, industry, and higher education as well. Consequently, local school systems should seek the active involvement and commitment of all relevant agencies and institutions in all phases of re-examining the school organization. This especially includes the local teacher education organizations and community related school organizations. More than that, persons with technical skills common to industry but new to education are becoming increasingly essential to school teaching staffs. This has always been true among vocational education teachers, but is has recently become more crucial in other areas of learning.

Local school systems should consider seriously how business and industry and professional people can be actively involved in the training and retraining of school personnel and in the implementation of the new staffing patterns. Feasibility of such cooperation varies greatly from community to community. Local conditions should dictate the nature of this involvement.

11. To what extent will the re-examination of your school organization be coordinated with other local, state and federal programs? Every effort should be made to maximize the return on every dollar spent in education. Recently, we have received considerable encouragement to do a better job of long-range comprehensive planning, and coordination must be clearly stated; something other than superficial understanding and relationships must exist.

12. Have you considered a realistic design for evaluating the proposed flexible staffing patterns as they are related directly to your instructional objectives? The evaluation of the process that you follow in establishing a flexible staffing pattern is important in effecting future changes in the educational organization. The documentation of the process that you follow is especially important in establishing a training program for educational personnel as related to the implementation of staff differentiation. It is essential that proper and adequate strategy be developed for the improvement of any school operation.

These introductory comments and the questions relevant to the development of flexible staffing patterns and related training activities are meant to provide a better comprehension of the differentiated staffing process and to help committed educators to make the adjustments to new staffing patterns more readily.

This monograph was prepared by Mr. Marshall Frinks as one in a continuing series of Information Reports focused on a "Readiness For Differentiated Staffing."

For further information concerning developments in Florida's preparation for testing variable patterns of flexible staff organization, you may contact Marshall Frinks, Associate for Program Development, Department of Education, 374 Knott Building, Tallahassee, Florida 32304.

*A stylized and free adaptation in part of the U. S. O. E., Bureau of Educational Personnel Development Guidelines for the More Effective School Personnel Utilization Program, Dr. Donald K. Sharpes, Program Specialist.